



Maine Health and Human Services

Office of Substance Abuse
Marquardt Bldg., 3rd Floor
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011

John Elias Baldacci, Governor
John R. Nicholas, Commissioner

October 25, 2005

Dear Customer:

On November 1, 2005 a new law was enacted that requires many cold and allergy pills containing pseudoephedrine to be placed behind the counter or in a locked cabinet in a pharmacy. Stores without pharmacies will no longer be able to carry these particular products. Liquid and gelcap forms of these medications will still be available as they always have on the shelves of any store. Only the starch based pills are affected by the law.

The reason for this new law is that pseudoephedrine is a key ingredient necessary to manufacture an illegal drug called methamphetamine. Methamphetamine abuse has spread throughout the country from west to east and is beginning to show up in Maine. People can make this drug at home, in cars or in motel rooms with ingredients that can be purchased at any discount, drug or hardware store. These "meth labs" pose a serious risk of explosion and fire as well as being repositories for dangerous chemicals that can leach into the ground contaminating soil and water supplies.

Other states have found that the most effective means of preventing the local manufacture of methamphetamine is to restrict access to pseudoephedrine. Starch based pills are the form of the drug most often used to make methamphetamine, so we have restricted only the pill forms of medication. We know that it may be an inconvenience to you, but hope you will have patience with your retailer and understand that this law was passed to protect communities in Maine from a problem that has ravaged rural areas in the Midwest and as close as Pennsylvania and upstate New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Johnson".

Kim Johnson, Director

Physical Location of:
Office of Substance Abuse
Marquardt Bldg., 3rd Floor
Eastside Campus, Blossom Lane
Augusta, ME 04333-0011

(207) 287-2595
Fax: (207) 287-4334
DEEP Line: (207) 626-8600
Information and Resource Center
(207) 287-8900/ 1-800-499-0027
TTY: (207) 287-4475